

New Technologies for Learning Showcase

Activity Sheet: Web 2.0 Series

Use a personalised online publishing tool ...

'teachers have known for a long time that students develop better communication skills when they are authentically communicating. A number of educators are helping their students developing their writing skills by having them publish their work as blogs, and then invite comments from people in the outside.'

<http://classblogmeister.com/>

A blog is a tool to connect both you and your students through the learning and assessment process. It's up to you how you as an educator on how you want to use it...you'll look at some educators for inspiration but to begin with this resource will take you through the basic steps bto get your own blog up and running, enjoy...

Follow up activity:

At the end of this activity, consider the following questions:

What did you learn by doing this activity?
How will you use this tool to enhance learning for your students?
Now, identify a specific learning activity to trial. When will you do this?
Who could you network with/show this to/share your trial with?

In these activities you will:

- Explore the possible use of blogs in education
- Create your own blog site (Personal learning environment)
- Publish blog entries
- Publish engaging multimedia, video, animations etc, in your blog

The Benefits of blogs in education:

- Personalised online communication tool to suit a variety of learning styles
- Potentially inspiring, engaging learning and assessment tool
- Anytime access to and publishing of media, text, video, photos
- Anytime, anywhere access to view and record journal entries for reflection and assessment

Resource requirement

- Computer with internet access and browser
- Images, media, files (optional)

Activity Instructions

1. Creating your own Blog Set up your account

- Open your web browser and go to: <http://www.blogger.com>
- Click on 'Take a quick tour' and read about blogs. Can you see how this tool could be useful?
- Time to create your own blog, click 'Create your blog'
- Enter your existing email address
- Enter your preferred password for Blogger (this will be different to your DET/TAFE password)
- Complete the rest of the page and REGISTER.
- Select a name for your blog. Something of professional or personal interest.
- Select a template. Don't worry too much about which one you use – you can change it later if you want.
- Your blog has been created, why not post something, click '**start posting**', add a title and something about yourself in the message and hit '**Publish**'
- Your blog has been published successfully, have a look by clicking 'View blog'.
- You now have yourveryown.blogspot.com address to publish to the internet.
- Log-out of your blogger Account by choosing 'Sign Out'



2. Publish content (Blog Posts) and comment on other blogs

- Go back to....<http://blogger.com> and log in, using your login name and password.
- This takes you to **the 'dashboard'** of your blog. (This is where you can change all the settings that control how your blogsite works. We'll come back to this later but for now lets publish some more content...) Click **'+ New Post'**



- Your blog entry publisher window will appear. Much like a word processor you can change the colour of text, add bullet points and header, notice the types of material you can put in your blog entry – text, links, photographs... have a play at adding an image and using the formatting tools then click **'publish'**
- Go back and see what your **yourveryown.blogspot.com web page** looks like.

Check out other blog examples and post comments (optional):

One of the great aspects of blogging is being able to comment on your students work for example: 'The Gong Media Student Blog' (<http://tinyurl.com/yqwva8>) and colleagues work 'Learning without borders blog' (<http://tinyurl.com/yrpfrd>).

- Click **'Comment'** at the bottom of a blog post to add a comment
 - Similarly, share your blog with others and ask them to comment
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3. Activity

Configure your blog to work how you want, open or closed - 5 mins

- There are benefits in publishing openly to the internet, but if you don't want the whole world to be able to view what you write or if you need a closed environment for students blogging, then the **Blogger 'Dashboard' is where you can configure your blogs to work how you want, Open or Closed.**
- To do this go back to your Blogger **'Dashboard'** and click **'Settings'**.

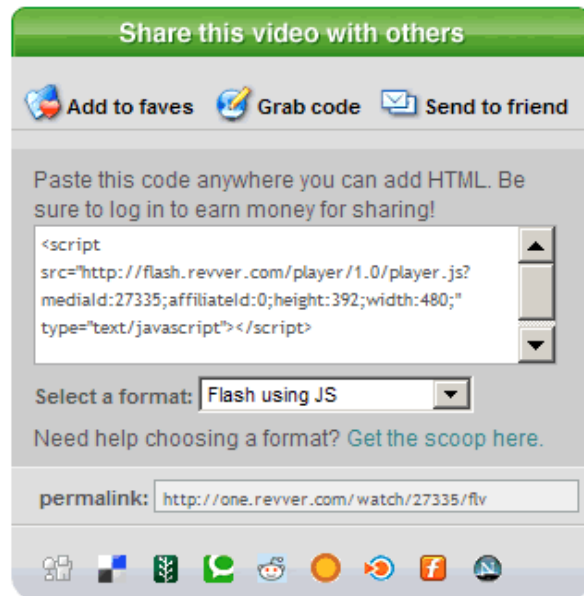


- Choose **'Permissions'**, if you want your students to be able to contribute, simply click **'Invite'**, enter their emails to Invite more people to write to the blog - this then becomes a 'class' blog rather than an individual one.
 - Choose **'Who can view this blog? / Only people I choose / Only blog authors'** There are benefits to having an open blog, but duty of care and tracking may need to be considered with student's contributions.
 - OK, now choose **'Comments'**, have a look at the various choices available for using comments on your blog. Think carefully on your reasons for restricting comments. Should you wish to restrict comments to your classroom only choose **'Only members of this blog'** from **'Who can comment'**.
 - Important choose yes for **'Show word verification for comments?'**, Why? If you don't your blog will be open to the scourge of the internet, Spam! Spam is automated junk mail, word verification means should a viewer wish to comment they must enter a list of letters and numbers before the comment is posted.
 - Also, in the **'Comment Notification Address'** field insert your email, this way you'll be informed when a comment is posted.
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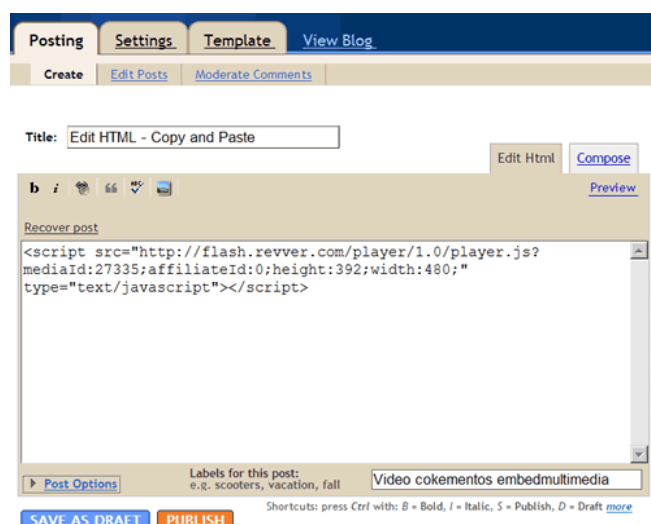
4. Optional - Take a deep breath and go for it :-) Finding and putting ENGAGING multimedia within your blog

'What happens when you mix 200 litres of Diet Coke and over 500 Mentos mints? The results are completely insane.' We'll now embed a video that shows you using the video sharing website <http://revver.com>

- Go to <http://one.revver.com/watch/27335> what do you think? Look for the link, '**Grab code**'. As the instructions say 'Paste this code anywhere you can add HTML.' **You can add HTML to your blog posts.** Click on and copy ALL of the the code.



- As before **go to blogger.com** log onto the **dashboard** click '**+New post**' then choose '**Edit HTML**'.
- HTML stands for Hyper Text Markup Language, don't worry, you don't have to know the technicalities of HTML to publish to your blog, just how to copy and paste the HTML code i.e...



- Notice the labels to describe the content of the post, you can use these to categorise your blog posts.
 - Click '**Publish**' and '**View Blog**'. **Would this engage your students?**
 - Why not link to a resource explaining the science of how this happening? By searching on the online encyclopedia Wikipedia you will find why
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mentos_eruption
 - There are many free online tools to enable you create and publish resources for example:
 - <http://revver.com> find and share videos,
 - <http://www.slide.com> create slideshows,
 - <http://www.slideshare.net/> publish and share powerpoint.
 - These tools are commonly referred to as Web 2.0 technologies. Many of these tools enable you to put the media you or your students create into your blog. Have a quick look at these tools, search on some of the content and look for HTML code to embed into your own blog. **How could you create engaging media for your students using these tools?**
 - Where to next....read this <http://tinyurl.com/yo53fw> Worth following...
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5 Finding inspiration (optional - now or for later)

<i>'We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own.'</i> Ben Sweetland	<i>'We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.'</i> Aristotle	<i>'You are your own best teacher'</i> Jimmy Buffet
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It's easy to learn how to use new blogging technologies. Applying your new found skills within your teaching practice is the key.

This is a research activity try and find some inspiration. You might want to spend some time searching the internet to find blogs that relate to your teaching expertise or talk to your students and colleagues how they'd like to use a blog, here are a few inspirational links to give you an idea of what some edubloggers are doing out there and the issues...

- Trades blog, used by Metal Fabrications teachers for professional development and pulling together resources.
<http://metaledblog.blogspot.com/>
- Professional reflection blog (Michael Nelson) great post on engaging learning and assessment within the context of training packages
<http://liveandletlearn.net/my-vision-for-learners-in-the-21st-century/>
- How to set up a student centered classroom blog.
<http://mhetherington.net/blogs/?p=8>
- From the Front Lines: Continuous Improvement is a Belief System and an Attitude
<http://www4.asq.org/blogs/edu/>

Additional Examples & Resources

<http://gongmedia.blogspot.com/>

<http://learningwithoutborders.edublogs.org>

<http://tafeonline07.blogspot.com/>

A short video 'Wanna work together' on sharing learning with others and copyright within a blogging world - <http://tinyurl.com/23qbs6>

TAFE online guidelines for blogs within the classroom <http://tinyurl.com/yrmlkh>

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